PROMISING PRACTICE

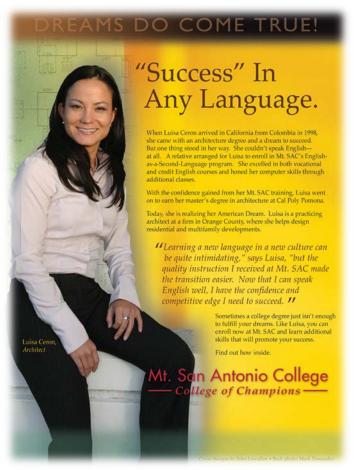# MT. SAN ANTONIO COLLEGE
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Using ESL Student Portfolios
To Track Level Progress

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CASAS National Summer Institute 2011

MT. SAC ESL
PROGRAM OVERVIEW

- Scope: 3400 unduplicated Ss
- Staff: 55 – 60 all adjunct faculty and ~ 20 tutors
- Program Structure: 7 Levels of proficiency includes
  - "*Level*" classes: Integrated skills, portfolio-based assessment
  - "*Skill*" classes: Focus on R/W, L/S, TOEFL, Citizenship Prep …
  - *VESL Career Paths*: Advanced bridge program
- Portfolios have been used in all the ESL Levels since 2001

Overview of ESL Student Portfolios

- **Shared responsibility** of teaching and learning
- **Evidence-based** approach to track level progress
- **Cumulative history** of progress gives a big-picture and holistic perspective
- **"Progress Report" cover sheet** minimizes bulk without loss of evidence
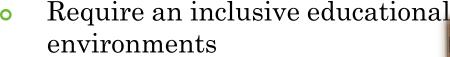
OVERVIEW OF ESL STUDENT PORTFOLIOS

- Systematic approach – all instructors use the same form

- Level progress considers student's entire portfolio, not just the final exam

- Final level (Level 6), students receive their portfolio along with certificate

WHY WE IMPLEMENTED ESL PORTFOLIOS

Reason #1

Majority of our students are adult learners with well-established self identities and life experiences who:

- Require an inclusive educational environments
- Are self-directed learners
- Want active engagement in the learning process
- Are lifelong learners who need English for work and personal needs

WHY WE IMPLEMENTED ESL PORTFOLIOS

Reason #2

All-adjunct faculty aspire for a balance between quality teaching and efficiency

- Streamlining the process allowed for dialog about course objectives
- Sharing lesson ideas and syllabi reduced work outside of class
- Standardizing and streamlining same-level syllabi
- Comparing student's readiness for level progress and measuring student learning outcomes
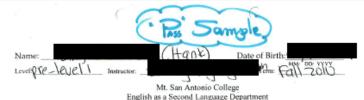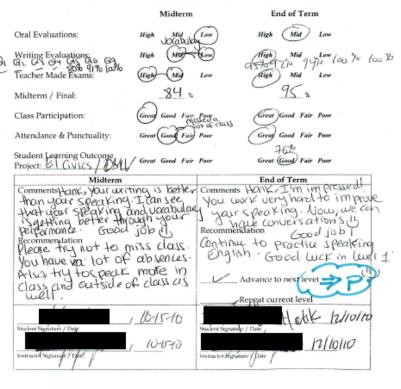
WHY WE IMPLEMENTED ESL PORTFOLIOS

Reason #3

Value of evidence-based data for internal and external accountability:

- Provides resource for level-transfer requests from students
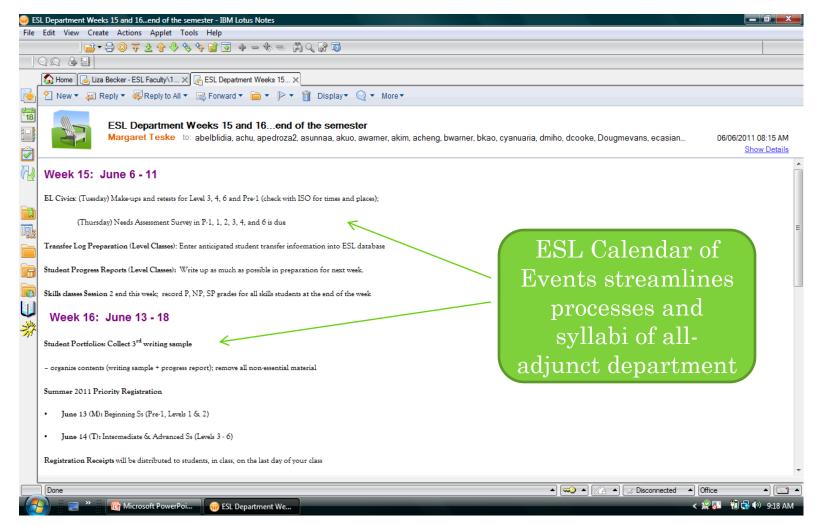- Verify student advancement through noncredit ESL program

Logistics & Resource Needs of the Portfolio Process

- Hard copies (vs. electronic versions) of portfolios still seem to work best for our highly mobile population and our all-adjunct faculty:

1. Begin the process four weeks into the term to avoid the initial drops and no-shows
2. Collect and redistribute the portfolio folders of dropped or transferred Ss
3. Print and distribute the Progress Reports on 3-part NCR paper
4. Utilize classroom aides in preparing the labels
5. Instructional support staff conduct quality checks just after mid-term

COLLABORATIVE & STANDARDIZE PROCESSES BENEFIT STUDENTS

ESL Calendar of Events streamlines processes and syllabi of all-adjunct department

ASSESSING THE VALUE OF PORTFOLIOS

- VESL Career Paths Student Focus Group (Spring, 2010)
  - job advancement, transitioning to credit, and lifelong learning strategies.
  - gained confidence in their abilities as English speakers and computer users
  - were better prepared to apply for jobs and provide samples of their proficiencies (e.g., using Microsoft programs and writing coherent essays)
  - shared the portfolio with family and friends to show their accomplishments in the program
  - Planned ways to continue with English improvement as they exit the highest level of noncredit ESL

Evidence of Quality Teaching & Learning

Mt. SAC ESL Persistence & Level Progress (June, 2011)

CASAS Data Portal

Introduction » California » Persister Report

California Adult Education Data

California WIA Title II Learners Persister Report

Start here:	Agency ▼
Refine your search:	Mt. San Antonio CCD ▼
Program year:	2009-2010 ▼

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Educational Functioning Level Persistence Rates

			ABE		ASE	ESL							All	Remove all
Type	Name	Program Year				Beg. Lit.	Beg. Low/High		Int. Low	Int. High	Low Adv	High Adv	All	
CA State Average		2009-2010	6			70.1%	71.5%	72.2%	74.2%	74.4%	72.1%	N/A	69.6%	
Agency	Mt. San Antonio CCD	2009-2010	6			75.0%	76.9%	74.3%	82.8%	87.0%	83.0%	N/A	71.4%	Remove
						(4)	(13)	(70)	(754)	(378)	(1039)	N/A	(3801)	

> Student progress is consistently above the state average →

Note: The number in parentheses represents enrollment in Federal Table 4 Educational Functioning Level.

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IN SUMMARY
MT. SAC'S ESL PORTFOLIOS…

- Benefit Students by
  - Allowing them to critically reflect on their own learning progress
  - Helping them to develop lifelong learning strategies for English and job advancement, beyond the ESL program.

In Summary
Mt. SAC's ESL Portfolios...

- Benefit Instructors & Strengthen the Program by
  - Bringing a degree of standardization to the evaluation progress
  - Providing opportunities for teachers to discuss how to best measure their students' learning – fine-tuning rubrics, norming their assessments, matching instruction to course objectives
  - Continuing to develop professionally and personally through collaboration with colleagues and cross-training workshops

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